

One of the most important documents in our nation's history, the Declaration of Independence, specifically addresses civil rights: equality among individuals and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But while these truths might be "self-evident," we have to work hard to make sure they're fulfilled.

The Golden Rule is a great rule to live by, and more of us need to practice it. I pride myself on the work I have done in support of civil rights and I will continue to speak out on these issues whenever I have the opportunity, both in Washington and on the Central Coast.

Bills I Cosponsored in the 112th Congress:

- [H.R. 998](#) - Student Non-Discrimination Act of 2011 – Prohibits public school students from being excluded from participating in any federally-assisted educational program on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity or that of their friends. This bill also considers harassment to be a form of discrimination. Furthermore, this bill authorizes federal departments and agencies to enforce these prohibitions by cutting off the educational assistance of recipients found to be violating them.
- [H.R. 1116](#) – Respect for Marriage Act – Amends the Defense of Marriage Act to allow a state, territory, possession, or Indian tribe to recognize any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other state, territory, possession, or tribe regarding a same sex marriage. Additionally, this bill removes the definition of "spouse" which is currently defined as, "a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."
- [H.R. 1397](#) - Employment Non-Discrimination Act – Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- [H. Con Res 40](#) - Supporting the goals and ideals of the National Day of Silence - Supports the goals and ideals of the Day of Silence (during which students vow to remain silent to bring attention to the harassment and discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in schools). Encourages each state, city, and local education authority to adopt laws and policies to prohibit name-calling, bullying, harassment, and discrimination against students, teachers, and other school staff regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity or gender expression.
- [H. Res 100](#) - Honoring the life of David Kato and all who are victims of violence in Uganda because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Actions in the 112th Congress:

- On April 15, 2011, I spoke on the House Floor in honor of the National Day of Silence, an

event that brings attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. You can read my statement [here](#) , watch the video [here](#) .

- I signed a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commending her leadership in responding to human rights abuses targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals around the world, and ask that she continue to build on this commitment. As Congress sets out its foreign affairs and LGBT agendas, my colleagues and I wrote to Secretary Clinton to better understand and support the State Department's work on these issues, including reporting on the conditions of local LGBT communities worldwide and our country's broader human rights, public diplomacy and international development priorities.